

Lesson 22: The Last Three Judgments

Lesson Introduction

In this final lesson of Bible Doctrine, we will examine the 3 Judgments that take place in the end times. For the believer, there is the Judgment Seat of Christ. What takes place there; will the believer face judgment of Heaven or Hell?

Then there is the Judgment of the nations, which consists of people that have lived through the Tribulation. Finally we will look at the Judgment of the unbeliever. At the Great White Throne of Judgment, all unbelievers are resurrected to be judged; their destination – the Lake of Fire. As we study this and get a better understanding of the eternity that the unbeliever faces, it should motivate and drive us to be better soul-winners for Christ.

Lesson Outline:

Topic 1: The Judgment of the Believer

The Bema Seat

Eternity

Topic 2: The Judgment of the Nations

Topic 3: The Judgment of the Unbeliever

Eternal Hell

Topic 1: The Judgment of the Believer

We're going to look at three judgements that we see in eschatology. WE're talking about the study of end times, the study of last things. the first thing we're going to look at is the believer's judgments. First of all let me ask you this: Will a believer stand before God and face the judgment of whether they've been good enough, or whether they deserve heaven or hell? They will not. If that person's a believer, if they've put their trust in Jesus Christ, it says in 2 Corinthians 5:21). So when God sees us, he doesn't see a sinner, he sees the righteousness of Christ given to us. so we stand not guilty before God the judge; 1Peter 2:24) Again, not because of anything we've done, but because of the righteousness of Christ we are healed, by his stripes we are healed. Then, Romans 8:33 tells us that the believer can never face jeopardy again; (Romans 8:33) So the believer will not have to stand before God in that type of judgment, determining whether they will go to heaven or hell. But there is a judgment reserved for the believer, and a judgment that we believe is future. We believe the judgment to be sometime after the rapture of the church, sometime before the battle of Armageddon. So sometime within the seven year tribulation period, when the church is rapture, taken up to heaven, that will be the time in which we will be at the judgment seat of Christ Let's look at the 2 passages where the believers find out that they will face the judgment. 2 Corinthians 5:10 says (2 Cor 5:10). Then we find in (Romans 14:10). So here twice we have reference to what is called the judgment seat. This is literally the Bema seat. Bema seat is where we get the word judgment, and that was the seat in ancient Greco-Roman times where the judge would sit and view the games that were going on and give speeches. This was not, and never was a judicial bench. This was a bench of observation and a bench of reward. It was a place where the emperor rewarded the contestants. So that is the type of seat, not the seat of a judge, but the seat of one whom will reward the accomplishments of those that are in the battle, in the race, in the fight. We must all, if we are going to appear before the judgment seat of Christ, have lived in this life 100% for the Lord Jesus Christ, just like

an athlete. That's all we care about, that's all we think about. We don't think about the pleasures of the world; sometimes God gives us things and that's fine, but we should be thinking about the accomplishments, what we can do for him, and the rewards.

QUESTION 1

A believer in Christ will never have to face the _____ of going to hell.

QUESTION 2

There will be a _____ that believers will face one day.

QUESTION 3

The word "judgment seat" in 2 Corinthians 5:10 literally means _____ seat.

QUESTION 4

The Bema Seat is the seat of one whom will reward the _____ of those that are in the battle, in the race, in the fight.

The Bema Seat

But the judgment seat of Christ, it's the bema seat of Christ. After the rapture, when Christ comes for the saints, and before he returns with his saints, this is one of 2 things we see happening during the tribulation while we're in heaven, the other is the marriage supper of the Lamb. It's a time when the bride of Christ, which is the church, is united with the groom, which is Christ, and so shall we ever be with the Lord, there's going to be a great feast and a wonderful time at that event as well. We're talking about the bema seat of Christ, the reward seat of Christ. The bride when coming back with Christ in Revelation 19, is seen as already being rewarded, that's why we think that happens between the rapture and the return of Christ. What are some of the rewards that we find in Scripture? We find several – we find them as crowns. One was called the crown of life James 1:12 and that is given out for faithfulness. Another crown is called the incorruptible crown, and that's in 1 Corinthians 9:25, given to separated Christians. Christians that don't care what the world thinks about them, if the world makes fun of them for not drinking smoking partying or listening to the world's music, we don't care. We're going to do what God wants us to do, and do it without any real embarrassment about it; we're going to be separated. We're not going to be weird, but we're going to be separated. "peculiar people separated unto God"...there's a crown for that, the incorruptible crown. 1 Thessalonians 2:19 talks about a crown of rejoicing; who is that for? It's for people who win souls. 1 Peter 5:2-4 talk of a crown of glory...this is for a shepherd or pastor, the reward for a pastor. 2 Timothy 4:8 – are you longing for the return of the Lord, are you excited about His appearing? 2 Timothy 4:8, for those loving the appearing of Christ. Those are some things that we find in scripture, some of the rewards, crowns that we find, and I think there's more than that. I frankly believe that these all have something to do with positions of authority. Now you say well doesn't the bible say that people will cast their crowns at Jesus feet? And it does say that, it doesn't say all believers will but that the 24 elders will. And I think that all of us will be willing to cast our crowns before His feet. We will say I'm not worthy of this, and he will say no it is yours, I want you to have it. This is a reward for your life of faithfulness in service to me. So I think it's important that we think about that judgment, not a judicial bench, but a seat of rewarding accomplishment and faithfulness.

QUESTION 5

Those who are faithful will receive the Crown of _____.

QUESTION 6

Those who long for the Lord's appearing will receive the Crown of _____.

QUESTION 7

Those who win souls will receive the Crown of _____.

QUESTION 8

Those who live a separated life will receive the _____ Crown.

Eternity

But what does the Bible say about Heaven? Stephen looked up into heaven, and as he was being stoned to death, he looked and he saw Christ. Heaven is real. Stephen saw the Lord in heaven; Paul was caught up into the third heaven. Heaven is a real place. Just as real as you are standing here, and I believe there will be reality there. It's not just a cloud and floating around, its real life, much more real than this life I think. New heavens and new earth, the Bible talks about in (2 Peter 3:12-13) So after the millennium, it seems like there is going to be a new heaven and a new earth, or maybe a remade earth. An earth that is totally remade by fire, and the reason I think it may be remade instead of brand new, with new elements, is because the land was given to Israel forever. But I think it's going to be totally, after that final rebellion, after the great white throne of judgment, a totally remade heaven and earth. (Revelation 21:1-2) It's going to be massive, it's going to be awesome, the new heavens and new earth, the new Jerusalem, What's life in heaven going to be like? It's going to be a life of fellowship. It's going to be a life were we know Christ, and he knows us, and we'll be able to speak to him. It will be a life of rest. A life of knowledge and learning; For all eternity we'll be learning, and learning can be enjoyable, and is enjoyable, and learning about the things of God, and can you imagine, the eye has not seen, nor the ear heard, the things that God has in store for those that love him? It's going to be awesome, unbelievable, so much better than here. Someone said, I hope the Lord returns, but after this event, or vacation, or right before school starts again. But no, it's going to be so much better. We won't even believe it, how much better it's going to be. It's going to be a life of holiness, (Revelation 21:27) it's going to be glorious in that it is holy. It's going to be a life of joy (Revelation 21:4) It's going to be a life of service, we're going to be able to serve Jesus Christ all the time (Revelation 22:3) And then it's going to be a life of abundance. (Revelation 21:6) In abundance God will give and give. It's going to be a life of glory, it's going to be a life of worship. Heaven is going to be great.

QUESTION 9

Scripture offers much evidence that Heaven is a place of _____.

QUESTION 10

2 Peter 3 tells us that there will be a _____ Heaven and new earth.

QUESTION 11

The human mind cannot begin to _____ what God has in store for those that love Him.

QUESTION 12

Heaven is going to be a life where we _____ Christ, and He knows us, and we'll be able to speak to Him.

Topic 2: The Judgment of the Nations

Then we have the judgment of the nations. This is another judgment that we find coming up. This takes place following the second coming of Christ, when he returns with the saints, with us. In Joel 3 it talks about the nations of the world coming together to be judged, it describes the judgment of living people, that's why we don't think this is the resurrection of the dead, and they will be facing another judgment, we'll talk about that in a moment, but this is the judgment of living people. There are some that will live through the tribulation, and even the battle of Armageddon, there will be some that live through that, and there will be a judgment. In Matthew 24 and 25 it talks about the sheep and the goats judgement, it's the judgment of the nations. Matthew 25:32-34) So the sheep are those that have accepted; the goats are those that have rejected him. Judgment, it seems is also based on treatment of the Jews. Now we use this verse, and I believe accurately, to say those that do things in the name of Christ will be rewarded, we call it the cup of cold water in his name. That verse, Matthew 25:40, is one that doesn't necessarily apply to our age, but the principle does apply to our age. But that verse in particular is a verse that deals with Israel and the treatment of Israel during the tribulation. Those that treat them well, will be considered in that judgment. Only saved people are going to enter the millennium, and so at that time there will be the judgment of the nations.

QUESTION 13

The judgment of the nations is the judgment of those who have lived through the _____.

QUESTION 14

The _____ are those that have accepted Christ.

QUESTION 15

The _____ are those who have rejected Christ.

QUESTION 16

Only _____ people will go into the Millennium.

Topic 3: The Judgment of the Unbeliever

Then the third judgment we see in Bible prophecy, is the judgment of what is called the great white throne. Now this is a judgment of wicked dead and it's going to determine their degree of punishment. You say I thought hell was hell? Hell is hell; hell is fire torment forever day and night, but I also think according to several places in Scripture there seems to be degrees of hell; in other words I think someone like Hitler is going to be suffering more than someone who was ignorant, but not as malicious or awful. I have to think that, and we also find in Revelation 20 that the dead are judged out of the books according to their works. So works do come into play, but it's evil works, and it's the works that they'll be punished with the degrees of hell. (Revelation 20:11-13) So you see that the one book is the book of life, if their name was not in that, which it wouldn't be, then the other books contained their evil deeds, their works. All these people had to stand there and be judged, what a terrifying time this has to be. When we stand before Christ it won't be a judgment of condemning us, or looking at us and saying why were you doing that sin or that sin, no his blood paid for all the sins. Now he might be disappointed in what you did or didn't do for him, but it's not a judgment of sin in anyway, the judgment seat of Christ. This is a judgment of sin, and a degree of how they will be punished. (Revelation 20:14-15) So we see from that, and we see from other places, like in Matthew 11, when Jesus was condemning the cities around him that rejected him in the upper galilee area, he says (Matthew 11:24). In other words, it seems from that verse and verses around there that there's people that know more; the people in those cities had Jesus right there, and I believe that because of rejecting him, they'll have to pay a little bit more, more degrees of hell because of the light they were given. In other words, hell will be more tolerable for those who are ignorant. Now hell is hell, and I'm not air conditioning it at all; it's going to be a terrible time of torment forever and ever. But I still think those that have committed the heinous crimes of the centuries will be punished more. Then, after the millennium, by the way, this all happens after the millennium, satan will be loosed in Revelation 20:7, he's released to deceive those who want to be deceived, the nations are gathering to battle, man will be placed in the millennium under ideal circumstances, they will have no outward temptations, Jesus will rule with a rod of iron, but there will be some that will live through the tribulation that will be saved, have children, and those children in those thousand years might not accept the Messiah. Even though Satan is bound, his influence still shows the depravity of man. So under ideal circumstances, no outward temptations, satan is bound, Christ is visible, yet in the end, that thousand years proves that man's heart is indeed desperately wicked, and there's going to be this final rebellion, God sends fire down from heaven in Revelation 20:9 to destroy that rebellion, Satan's power is going to end, he's going to be cast into the lake of fire, tormented forever, and then the great white throne of judgment.

QUESTION 17

The Great White Throne is a judgment of the _____ dead.

QUESTION 18

The unsaved person's degree of _____ will be determined at the Great White Throne.

QUESTION 19

Those who have been given more truth, and have _____ it more, will have a worse punishment.

QUESTION 20

At the end of the Millennium, those who are deceived by Satan _____ to be deceived.

Eternal Hell

It tells us in several places in Scripture that God appoints a day to judge the world. God's going to judge men's secrets by the Gospel. God will judge every man by his works, and they shall go into everlasting punishment. Another place that seems to indicate degrees of punishment is (Romans 2:5-6). So it seems that the wicked will be punished in degrees, according to the evil that they have committed. Now we've already talked about it a little bit, but let's talk about it quickly again. Some of the words that the Bible uses to describe hell...one is sheol. Sheol is an old testament word that describes a place for the departed spirits of man. You also find the word Hades in the new testament, that's the new testament word to describe the same exact place – the place for the departed spirits of men. Occasionally you will see the word "gehenna". Gehenna is in the Hinnom valley, if you're standing in the old city of Jerusalem and you look down into the valley, and there was a garbage dump, and what they would do is throw their garbage down, they'd have a fire down in there and it would always be smoldering, always burning, always smelling, always stinking. But it would be this awful smelly, gloomy, dark dismal place – gehenna. Jesus called Hades, gehenna. He likened Hades to that. So this is a dump, but the real gehenna, hell, is a place where the fire does not go out ever. (Mark 9:43-44) We also find that hell is called the abyss. The abyss is the place of fallen angels. The abyss is where we find some demons that are bound up, Satan I believe will be bound up, and loosed from the abyss. So we find these different references to hell. Now there are some theories that are unbiblical about hell. One is universalism. Universalism teaches that all are going to be finally saved in the end. I wish that were true, but I don't believe that to be true. Why not? Because then why does God say things like everlasting punishment? If in the end, God's going to say, ok that's enough, you've had enough torment and punishment, and hell, you can just come on in. Now, it says everlasting punishment, doesn't it, in Matthew 25:46, Mark 9:44, John 3:36, the wrath of God abideth in him. We have to believe in eternal hell because it is in scripture, it's very clear. Universalism is not true, neither is something called conditionalism. Conditionalism says that if you accept Christ, you have eternal life, but to reject Christ means you never had life...you cease to exist. And I wish that were true, that would make me sleep better, knowing that people aren't going into hell for ever and ever. But again, that is not true. Non-acceptance according to them means non-existence, but the biblical position is everlasting punishment. Everlasting punishment would seem to indicate a consciousness. So those are some things to think about when we think of hell, the great white throne of judgment, the souls cast into the eternal lake of fire.

QUESTION 21

Romans 2 indicates that there will be _____ of hell.

QUESTION 22

Eternal hell will be a place of _____ fire.

QUESTION 23

Universalism teaches that eventually, all those in hell will be _____ into Heaven.

QUESTION 24

Conditionalism teaches that if you accept Christ, you have eternal life; but to reject Him is to _____ to exist when you die.